

## Just Playing

by Anita Wadley

Gateways to Learning

Edmond, Oklahoma

When I'm building in the block room please don't say I'm "just playing," for, you see, I'm learning as I play, about balance and shapes.

When I'm getting all dressed up, setting the table, caring for the babies, don't get the idea I'm "just playing," for, you see I'm learning as I play; I may be a mother or father someday.

When you see me up to my elbows in paint, or standing at an easel, or molding and shaping clay, please don't let me hear you say, "He's just playing," for, you see, I'm learning as I play. I may be an artist or an inventor someday.

When you see me sitting in a chair "reading" to an imaginary audience, please don't laugh and think I'm "just playing," for, you see, I'm learning as I play. I may be a teacher someday.

When you see me combing the bushes for bugs, or packing my pockets with choice things I find, don't pass it off as "just play," for, you see, I'm learning as I play. I may be a scientist someday.

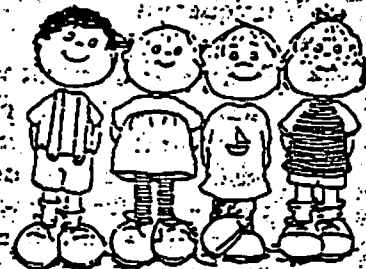
When you see me engrossed in a puzzle, or some "plaything" at my school please don't feel the time is wasted in "play," for, you see, I'm learning as I play. I'm learning to solve problems and concentrate. I may be in business someday.

When you see me cooking or tasting foods, please don't think that because I enjoy it, it is "just play." I'm learning to follow directions and see differences. I may be a chef someday.

When you see me learning to skip, hop, run and move my body, please don't say I'm "just playing." I'm learning how my body works. I may be a doctor, nurse or athlete someday.

When you ask me what I've done at school today, and I say "I just played," please don't misunderstand me, for, you see, I'm learning as I play. I'm learning to enjoy and be successful in my work. I'm preparing for tomorrow.

Today, I am a child, and my work is play.





THE PARENT'S AFFIRMATION OF IMPERFECTION

It's perfectly okay for me to be imperfect. This includes not being a perfect parent. This means that it's okay that I have already made a lot of mistakes as a parent and that it's okay that I will make other mistakes in the future. What's not okay is for me to pretend that I am perfect and to thereby hide my mistakes from myself. Instead, I will catch my mistakes--with a smile rather than a kick--and learn what they have to teach me. That way, I won't make the same mistakes too often, and I'll become a better and better parent. But I'll never be a perfect parent, and that's okay, because my goal is simply to do my best, not perfection.

Accepting our own imperfection is vital to learning. The above affirmation is meant to help you clear the way for improvement as a parent.

STEP 1: Read the affirmation through once.

STEP 2: If you agree with what it says, read the affirmation through again, slowly. Breathe deeply as you let the words deeper into your belief system.

STEP 3: If you are having trouble, write the affirmation line by line on a blank sheet of paper. Pause after each line, and be aware of any thoughts or feelings that you have.

STEP 4: If you are still having trouble forgiving yourself for your imperfections, repeat this affirmation daily until it feels comfortable to you.

Popkin, Michael, Active Parenting. Harper and Row: San Francisco.